

Manly's editorial appeared on August 18, but it was not until weeks later that Democratic Party officials began to make political hay out of its content. Walker Taylor recalled for members of the Wilmington Light Infantry that "when that article appeared, it required the best efforts we could put forth" to prevent whites from lynching Manly. Taylor also explained that the leaders did not immediately make an issue of the article, thus keeping white vehemence in check: "Simmons, who was here at the time told us that the article would make it an easy victory for us" in November. The *Morning Star* asked its readers to "be brave, but be prudent" because "self-control is one of the highest attributes of courageous manhood." Simmons urged Wilmington's Democratic Party leaders to "try and prevent any riot until after the election."⁷

Although Democrats sought to control response to the article, there was an immediate reaction in both the black and white reading public. Rumors circulated that Manly would be lynched, and it was reported that he had received written threats to leave the city. In response, groups of black men armed themselves to protect him and the press at its downtown location at the corner of Water and Princess Streets. The police force was able to disperse the crowd, but a few officers remained on guard duty for the night. The Ministerial Union and other black organizations defended Manly's right to publish on behalf of his race.⁸

⁷ "Minutes of the Association of the WLI" December 14, 1905, North Carolina Collection; *Morning Star*, (Wilmington), August 24, 1898.

⁸ "Resolved, That the Ministerial Union is in hearty sympathy with the efforts of the *Daily Record* in defending the rights of the race, and that each minister inform his congregation of the present situation and endeavor to sustain the paper by swelling its subscription list and urging prompt payment." Another religious group, the Wilmington District Conference and Sunday School Convention

Another reaction to Manly's article was that white advertisers pulled their ads from the paper, greatly reducing its income. Further, the owner of the building where the press office was located informed Manly that he had to vacate the building. Seeking support from the African American community, Manly moved his press to Love and Charity Hall on South Seventh Street, and the Ministerial Union encouraged pastors to "endeavor to sustain the paper by swelling its subscription list." Further, towards the end of the campaign, Wilmington's African American women, through an article in the *Daily Record*, explained that they supported Manly because his was the "one medium that has stood up for our rights when others have forsaken us."⁹

Despite early support from segments of the black community, Manly's article was criticized by other blacks who understood the awkward position in which he had placed them. To support Manly would lead to certain trouble with Democrats. The Republican Executive Committee, including 12 black leaders, met at the end of August and criticized the article and refuted Democratic Party claims that Manly or the *Record* represented the Republican Party. Black leaders from as far away as Raleigh condemned the article in the *News and Observer* while others remained silent on the issue. Local Fusionists like Populist Benjamin Keith also discounted the article, claiming that it was "the product of a gross

of Methodists resolved to support Manly and his paper "as long as she stands forth in the protection of the ladies of our race," and promised to "stand by you" even in the event of "hazarding our lives." *Wilmington Messenger*, September 13, 16, 1898; *Morning Star*, (Wilmington), August 25, 1898.

⁹ Within days of the near riot around the *Record* press offices, Manly moved the press to Ruth Hall, also known as Love and Charity Hall or Free Love Hall. *Morning Star*, (Wilmington), August 25, 26, 1898; *Contested Election Case*, 377; *Wilmington Messenger*, October 21, 1898.